



CONNECTIONS

OxRSS provides Oxford research staff with a voice and networking opportunities

WWW.OXRSS.OX.AC.UK ■ JULY 2020 ■ VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

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ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES WITH EVENTS

Many aspects of the coronavirus lockdown have eased in England. However, COVID-19 has brought gender inequalities into sharp focus. Parents have been one of the worst affected groups by the coronavirus pandemic in terms of productivity. Unfortunately, women are likely to bear a greater burden since it is reported that women spend 8.5 hours more per week on parenting and domestic tasks than their male peers (Jolly et al., 2014). Many of us have heard anecdotal evidence about the gender divide related to COVID-19, but research on the topic also shows increasing inequalities. Comparing preprint submissions in late March and early April 2020 to the same dates in 2019, the number of male authors has grown more than the number of female authors. Additionally, women make up only a third of all authors who have published research on COVID-19 (Pinho-Gomes A., 2020). Andersen et al., estimated that the proportion of COVID-19 papers with a woman first author was 19% lower than that for papers published in the same journals in 2019 (Andersen J., 2020). The Events Team are committed to trying to find solutions that might help to balance inequalities during COVID-19. Besides our online social events to stay connected during this period, we arranged sessions of Virtual Writing Boot Camps. Unfortunately, despite our strong aim to arrange parallel children events, it turned to be difficult due to online safeguarding issues for children. We have discussed a range of activities with different companies and we are putting strategies in place to make activities as safe as possible for children. Hopefully, we will start childrens activities next term. This is a complex area and it is our responsibility as members of the society to be proactive, diverse, transparent, informed and trained in both bias and the institution's history. Restoring the setbacks of this period will require additional steps, backed by institutional cross-departmental inequalities strategy. With your suggestions and experiences, the action needed can be better supported.

By Liliana Cifuentes

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 23 September, OxRSS Annual General Meeting
- Virtual Pub Socials
- Virtual Boardgames Socials
- Virtual Writing Bootcamps
- Language exchange

OXRSS EVENTS DURING LOCKDOWN

Pub Social Events (Carline Korell)

In response to COVID-19, OxRSS has adapted their events to an online format in order to reach more researchers who wish to connect and network. One of these is the weekly 'Pub Social' event that occurs every Thursday. Researchers can access this event via Zoom where participants can see and talk to each other in either a big group or in smaller groups. These smaller groups are facilitated by the 'breakout room' function where participants are randomly allocated in 'smaller' rooms, allowing for more interaction amongst each other.

The event has been well visited with a strong set of regulars, and also a small stream of 'new' people. The researchers' backgrounds are very diverse and

therefore, invites interesting conversations about different cultures. The atmosphere is kept light and informal, just like a normal visit to the pub would be. Just as in the in-person meet-ups, researchers are not expected to purchase alcoholic drinks, but are rather invited to connect with researchers from other departments across the university with whatever refreshments they prefer.

As the weather invites us to spend more time outside and the government having announced more hospitality spaces are allowed to open, we will hold the online Pub Social on a less regular basis. Please check the OxRSS emails for information or contact Caroline directly if you have any questions.

OXRSS PHOTO COMPETITION

At the beginning of the lockdown, we asked you to post your most creative dish with leftover food from the back of your cupboard. Our winner was the banana cake of Orode Aniejurengho . Here is the recipe:

- 4 over ripe bananas (defrosted, as they were stored in the freezer once they got overripe, don't worry they'll look really black but it's the excess sugars)
- 150 ml oil
- 150 g sugar
- 150 g self-raising flour
- 2 eggs

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas mark 4. Mash the bananas, and mix with the sugar. Next, add the eggs and mix. Then gradually add the oil, mixing at intervals. Finally, add the flour and mix till smooth.

Pour the mixture into an oiled bread loaf tin and place in the preheated oven. Bake until a knife comes out clean when piercing the cake.



Orode Aniejurengho's winning entry for the photo competition

The recipe is inspired by www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/brilliant-banana-loaf. We used more bananas than the online recipe, and oil instead of butter (there was none in the fridge). It didn't affect the taste and the banana cake was yummy! Our family discussed the sweetness of the cake and whether the sugar should be reduced. Give it a try!

Thank you Orode Aniejurengho for this fantastic recipe!

COVID-19 AND THE RESEARCH STAFF COMMUNITY

By Gwilym Rowlands

How has the coronavirus pandemic impacted you? It is a question that normally elicits quite a lengthy and at times deeply personal response. Through lockdown we have all been adapting to new challenges, both at home and at work. Researchers working directly on coronavirus have continued to work at the university, others in the medical sciences who have returned to clinical practice to help the NHS, many have been working remotely, while others have been furloughed. We are dealing with the lack of access to key facilities (labs, libraries), challenging working environments, caring responsibilities, concerns over current and future funding, and as restrictions ease the reopening buildings and return (or not!) to on site work. These are but a few of the concerns of Research Staff.

Maintaining direct input from Research Staff into discussions and policies, whether reacting to the coronavirus pandemic or broader concerns is, I believe, vital. Despite the pandemic, we have been able to convene regular online meetings of Research Staff representatives, to identify the issues impacting our community, and discuss and feedback of the response. Our concerns have been communicated to key decision makers, groups and University committees, including to the office of the Vice Chancellor and Patrick Grant (PVC Research). We have assisted with updating advice to Research Staff on fixed-term contracts, and have supported a University Wide survey of Research Staff to enable a deeper consultation and more targeted action.

Research staff are now represented on a number of University and Divisional Committees and have been

able to raise and reaffirm our concerns. Shortly before, and unrelated to coronavirus developments, I was invited to join University Council as a representative of Early Career Researchers. Coronavirus, and the financial implications across the entire collegiate University has been a large feature of the agenda.

In Michaelmas term 2019, three committees, The Research Staff Steering Committee, Research Staff Consultation Group, and Research Staff Working Group were also formed. These the specific purpose of developing and delivering a coherent strategy that addresses the needs of Research Staff, and have worked both on the ongoing coronavirus response, and also longer term objectives such as a Research Staff Hub. We have ensured representation (either directly, or through our Advocate for Research Staff – Prof. David Gavaghan) on the HR and Research Steering Groups – subgroups of the Michaelmas Coordination Group (MCG) tasked with enabling the University and its colleges to resume in Michaelmas Term “with as full a cohort as possible, the optimum combination of face-to-face teaching and online learning, and a fully operational research programme.”.

In response to the pandemic, OxRSS expanded our events programme to help support Research Staff, and much of this is detailed in articles in this issue. I cannot thank the Events Team, OxRSS Committee and representatives, as well as the groups and networks working in departments, faculties and colleges enough. Despite all the challenges, they have continued to volunteer time in support of our community.

Virtual Writing Boot Camps (Ann Giletti)

Across all of our diverse disciplines, lockdown has meant that researchers have lost access to labs, libraries, and live gatherings for interviews and data collection. So we thought about what positive, proactive things we could do to make the most of this time at home and came up with the Virtual Writing Boot Camp. Modelled on the live format practiced in the Humanities Division, these lockdown gatherings have

been offering researchers of all divisions an opportunity to meet virtually for an afternoon of intensive writing. In a structured, supportive environment of quiet and companionship, boot camp participants have been making progress on drafting their articles, scientific reviews and grant proposals. Thanks to hosts Kamila Kolpashnikova, Vignesh Murugesan (Editor: ‘and Ann Giletti’), these boot camps have been a great success!

Virtual Boardgames Social (Caroline Korell)

Another regular virtual event offered to the research community has been the Boardgames Social on Tuesdays. Following the biweekly meet-ups at the Boardgames Café ‘Thirsty Meeples’, we moved this event to a weekly basis online. Here, researchers have been invited to sign up to a free membership on

the online portal ‘boardgamesarena’ and play a selection of cooperative or competitive games, just as we have done before lockdown. Frederic and Michael have been great hosts throughout lockdown, guiding us through new games and making the Tuesday evening experience a happy and relaxing one. Thank you for all your efforts and patience (but not the wins!)

USEFUL RESOURCES

Career development, workshops, fairs and personal development

Careers Service

For one-on-one meetings with a Careers Adviser, and workshops and events specific for research staff.

People and Organisational Development

Obtain support for personal and professional development via courses and seminars on management, teaching, and personal development.

Support for researchers

This website contains information on support available to research staff from across the University.

Vitae

The national researcher development organisation.

Other resources

Health and safety

For information on occupational health and welfare

IT services

For technological and computing assistance.

Welcome Service

Welcome service for University members and their partners.

Social opportunities

Oxford University Newcomers' Club

For partners' of researchers, graduate students and staff to meet each other.

Oxford University Club

Members and staff of the University are welcome to this sports and social club.

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